NOT TO BE TAKEN
FROM THE LIBRARY

37374
BO
AM 19
9
copy

Boston University
College of Liberal Arts
Library

THE GIFT OF the author

July, 1929

378.744
BO
AM 1928
g2
copy 1

Ideal
Double Reversible
Manuscript Cover
PATENTED NOV. 15, 1898
Manufactured by
Adams, Cushing & Foster

28-6½

p 5394

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

CANONICAL AND EXTRA-CANONICAL RECORDS OF JESUS' CHILDHOOD

Submitted by

Blanche Minnich Green

(A.B., Simpson College-1920)

In partial fulfilment of requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

1928

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
LIBRARY

[illegible] Bldg.
Corings

July 1929

#5394

378.744
BU
AM 1927
gr
copy 1

CANONICAL AND EXTRA-CANONICAL RECORDS OF JESUS' CHILDHOOD

OUTLINE

CANONICAL AND EXTRA-CANONICAL RECORDS OF JESUS' CHILDHOOD.

Outline

I. Introduction.

A. The barrenness of the New Testament gospel records of the childhood of Jesus causes us to look elsewhere for material.

B. The wealth of material found in the extra-canonical sources is overwhelming and induces an interest in and an evaluation of these sources.

II. Extra-Canonical Sources.

A. In regard to the Nativity of Jesus.

1. Protevangelium of James.

2. Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew.

3. Gospel of Nativity of Mary.

4. The Sahidic Fragments of the Life of the Virgin.

5. History of Joseph the Carpenter.

B. In Regard to the Childhood of Jesus.

1. An Armenian Gospel of the Infancy.

2. The Arabic Gospels of the Infancy.

3. The Gospel of Thomas.

III. Canonical Sources.

A. In Regard to the Nativity of Jesus.

1. Matthew 1:2-12.

2. Luke 1:26-2:40.

B. In Regard to the Childhood.

1. Matthew 2:13-23.

2. Luke 2:40-52.

IV. Contrast and Comparison of the Material.

A. The pre-natal events influencing Jesus' life.

1. Immaculate Conception.

2. The Annunciation.

3. The Conception and Birth of John.

4. Joseph's Attitude.

5. Innocence of Mary established.

B. The Nativity Stories.

1. The Birth of Jesus.

2. The Shepherd's Adoration.

3. The Presentation at the Temple and other Adorations.

4. The Visit of the Magi.

C. The Childhood Stories.

1. The Flight into Egypt and Slaughter of the Innocents.

2. Days in Egypt.

3. The Return from Egypt.

4. Jesus' Life at Nazareth.

a.Jesus at play.

b. Jesus helping Joseph.

c. Jesus as healer.

d. Jesus, the malevolent.

e. Jesus at school.

5. The trip to Jerusalem at twelve.

6. The eighteen silent years.

7. The Death of Joseph.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2014

https://archive.org/details/canonicalextraca00gree

V. Evaluation of these Apocryphal and New Testament Materials.

VI. Conclusion.

CANONICAL AND EXTRA-CANONICAL RECORDS OF JESUS' CHILDHOOD

INTRODUCTION

CANONICAL AND EXTRA-CANONICAL RECORDS OF JESUS' CHILDHOOD.

INTRODUCTION

In the Gospels of the New Testament great consideration and place have been given to Jesus, the man. But Jesus, the boy, has been amazingly neglected in these same gospels. In regard to the early life of Jesus, two facts strike the reader of the New Testament: first, the scantiness of material regarding the thirty years preceding His brief ministry; and second, the peculiar character of much of this material. The private life of Jesus covered about thirty years yet these records give much more light on the three years of His ministry than on these earlier years. Here we have the records of Jesus, the prophet and Messiah, not of Jesus the private citizen. What lies behind these last years so fully lived, is but meagrely recorded. Such a barrenness of detail seems unbelievable and unwarranted. We cannot but wonder why this interesting period in the development of Jesus was so neglected. Knowing Jesus, the man, we must believe the statement so often given, "The boy is father to the man". It must have been so with Jesus! He, who in His manhood, most fully allowed God to reveal Himself in and through Him, must have had a boyhood, full and interesting. And we wish for light on those unrecorded days that were 'passing full'! The life of the youth appeals to the youthful. Who knows the gain there might have been in the appeal to the youth of all ages could we know the development of the God-consciousness in the boy Jesus? Surely our gain would be great!

Those who truly seek are not satisfied with the dearth of material given in our New Testament Gospels. Eagerly there is a searching for other documents and accounts. And a wealth of material is to be found in what is called The Apocryphal Gospels. Shailer Matthews says they are only supplementary material to the four gospels and their sources.[1] The fact that they have been so greatly used by the Catholic Church and quoted by the early Church Fathers gives some interest toward an investigation of these sources. They are known to have been rather late in origin and it is quite generally agreed by our foremost Bible students that they are for the most part unhistorical. Nevertheless an insatiable desire to know more of the early life of this man among men prompts a study of the Apocryphal material. So it is with great interest that we turn to these sources for their contribution to an understanding of this period in Jesus' life.

It will add to our interest in this study to know about the sources themselves, apart from the definite detailed information, which they give. Therefore our first consideration is a brief summary of each source, including information as to its history and authenticity, and criticisms by prominent authorities.

[1] Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible. p.308

EXTRA-CANONICAL SOURCES WHICH DEAL WITH THE NATIVITY.

1. The gospel of James or Protevangelium

This is the text which many authorities agree is the oldest of the Apocryphal Gospels of the Infancy. C. E. Stowe says the full original title is: "The Protevangelium of James, the brother of the Lord--Declaration and history how the most Holy Mother of God was born for our salvation".[1] It tells much about what took place in the life of Mary and her parents before the birth of Jesus. The author seems very solicitous to establish the perpetual virginity of Mary, hoping thus to add to the honor of Jesus. Cowper says that what the writer gives about Mary and her parents, is to add lustre to Jesus by showing how wonderfully God had provided for His incarnation and advent into the world.[2] Montagne Rhodes thinks that the Protevangelium and the Gospel of Thomas are the two texts that are original[3] and many concede that the two are close rivals in point of time. Donehoo thinks that the Protevangelium was used by the compilers of other Infancy gospels and has had a decided influence on all other legends dealing with the Infancy of Jesus. It was probably written in Greek originally, but there are older versions in the Syriac. As yet no Latin version has been found but Professor James says, "Such a thing seems to have existed, for a book identifiable with ours is condemned in the Gelasian Decree". The original may have come from the second century but the present version could not date earlier than the fourth.[4] The name, Protevangelium, is a modern one,

[1] Stowe, C. E., Origin and History of Books of the Bible. p.205
[2] Cowper, B. Harris, The Apocryphal Gospels. p. LIII.
[3] James, Montagne Rhode, The Apocryphal New Testament. p 38.
[4] Donehoo, James De Quincy, The Apocryphal and Legendary Life of Christ. p.XXX.

and was first given by Guillaume Postel who introduced it in the sixteenth century. The James of the title is usually considered as James the Less, the brother of Jesus.

Cowper says the gospel is neither genuine nor authentic--that it is a compilation of early traditions in which the author used the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Many uses are made of Old Testament material, both canonical and apocryphal,and of Jewish and Christian traditions.[1]

"Harnack thinks the Protevangelium is made up of three separate documents[2] (1) The story of Mary, (which,properly speaking is the book of James) was written a little before 250, (2) the account of the birth of Jesus, probably belongs to the end of the second century or the beginning of the third (3) The Book of Zacharias, which dates from the opening decade of the tenth century. He states with others, that the book in its present form does not go back farther than 350.

It is this book then,which seems to have given us the names of Joachim and Anna as the parents of Mary. It tells how they had been childless to old age; how an angel appearing separately to each of them, announced the birth of a child, how they vowed to dedicate to God that which should be born and how in fulfilment of this vow, Mary was brought to the temple at the age of three years. When she came to the age of twelve, the priests would not assume the responsibility of having a marriageable virgin at the Temple, and they sought a man to whose charge to commit her. The men assembled and in order to make a choice

[1] Cowper, B. Harris, The Apocryphal Gospels. p.XXIIX.
[2] Andrews, H. F., The Apocryphal Books. p. 156.

a miraculous test of rods was used, the idea of which is much like the story of Aaron's rod which budded. The men gave in their rods and from Joseph's alone there issued the dove. So he was chosen to have charge of Mary, much against his will. The story of the appearance of the angel Gabriel, and the announcement of the Savior's birth are similar to the account in Luke, as is also the reference to the taxing under Caesar Augustus. The account of Herod and the wise men and the explanation of the name Jesus, "because He shall save the people from their sins" are also so similar to Matthew's version as to cause one to think that the gospel of Matthew was used as a basis.

So it seems reasonable to think with Salmon[1] that the Protevangelium "is merely an attempt to embroider with legend the simpler narrative of the earlier Evangelists, and that it could not have come into existence if they had not gained a position of acknowledged credit long before".

2. The gospel of pseudo-Matthew, the Liber De Infantia.

As the Protevangelium has been called the child of the Synoptic Gospels, so may the other Infancy Gospels be called the children of the Protevangelium. These take the Protevangelium as their basis and add other ornaments and supplements. The gospel of Pseudo-Matthew seems to be just this kind of a gospel. James says that most of its contents are to be found in the Protevangelium and the gospel of Thomas. It is a Latin compilation, possibly dating back to the eighth or

[1] Salmon, George; A Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament. p. 195.

ninth century.[1] Donehoo however, thinks it is a compilation dating back to the fifth century--that there is a Greek original, although only a Latin text is now known.[2] Some think the compiler added to it pretended letters from Jerome in order to give it a credited introduction. Some of these letters claim that Matthew is the author, others say James wrote it. Pseudo-Matthew has additions to the story so that it incorporates more of the story of the boyhood of Jesus than does the Protevangelium. Some of the particulars which it adds to the story have passed into current ecclesiastical tradition and mythology. For instance it records how Mary, after coming out of the cave, laid her child in the manger, and how the ox and the ass which were there, adored the child. Thus we have the ass and the ox in our pictures of Jesus' birth. This gospel also tells of many wonders which took place in the flight to Egypt; how lions and leopards adored the child and harmlessly accompanied the party; how a palm-tree at the child's command bowed down its head and supplied its fruits to satisfy His mother's needs; how when he entered the idol Temple in Egypt, the idols all fell with their faces to the ground, and there lay broken and shattered. Many of the later incidents, as given from chapters twenty-five to forty-one, have their source in the gospel of Thomas.[3]

3. The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary.

This gospel is attributed to St. Jerome along with other writings

[1] James, M.R.: The Apocryphal New Testament. p. 70
[2] Donehoo, James De Quincy: The Apocryphal and Legendary Life of Christ. p. XXXI.
[3] James, M.R.: The Apocryphal New Testament. p. 76.

considered spurious. It has been taken almost wholly into the Legend of James de Voragine, and in this way has had its influence on art and literature. Donehoo says it is of Catholic composition, written in Latin about the fifth or sixth century.[1] James thinks it is just an amplification of the first chapters of Pseudo-Matthew, put into more elegant Latin but at that is a very poor production.[2] Pseudo-Matthew and the canonical gospels were both used as sources. The gospel gives the story of Mary's parents before her birth, her presentation at the temple and her life there until the age of fourteen. At that time she fell to the lot of Joseph, a carpenter who took her home with seven other virgins. Then follows the story of the annunciation in much the same way as it is given in the gospels. After telling of the perplexity of Joseph and his reassurance by the angel the text ends with the journey to Bethlehem and the birth of Christ.

4. Fragments of the Life of the Virgin, which Donehoo says are a series of Coptic fragments, [illegible] follow in a general way the traditions of the Protevangelium and Pseudo-Matthew with many divergent details added.[1] It is thought that they date back to the eleventh or twelfth century.

5. The History of Joseph the Carpenter.

Many authorities are of the opinion that this was written to exalt Joseph and his feast-day. Donehoo says the central theme is the problem of the universal reign of death on earth. It is of Egyptian origin, and

[1] Donehoo, James de Quincy: The Apocryphal and Legendary Life of Christ. p. XXXI.
[2] James, M.R.: The Apocryphal New Testament. p. 79.

though possibly written in Greek he thinks it was most probably written in the Coptic.[1] It is generally referred to the fourth century, although some think it is not so ancient. Cowper says that the writer incorporated many of the older traditions but drew upon his imagination for his plan and many of the details.[2] The writer pretends that the contents in the main were spoken verbally by Christ to his disciples on Mount Olivet; that they wrote them down and put them away for safe-keeping in the library at Jerusalem.

GOSPELS OF THE INFANCY AND EARLY CHILDHOOD.

1. An Armenian Gospel of the Infancy.

This text came into the Armenian from the Syriac but James says the date of the Syriac version is open to question. An Armenian writer of the twelfth century mentioned an Infancy gospel which may have been this one. As do many of the other gospels, so this one seems very dependent on the Protevangelium and Thomas' gospel for its source material which it has ornamented and supplemented.[3] The story takes up the birth of Mary and her early life, the marriage and the annunciation. This account makes much of the coming of the shepherds and the maji followed by the flight into Egypt. Many destructive as well as constructive miracles are related both during the sojourn in Egypt and upon their return. It seems to add nothing of importance.

2. The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy.

This is one of the longest of the Infancy gospels. James says it

[1] Donehoo, James DeQ.: The Apocryphal and Legendary Life of Christ. p. XXXII.
[2] Cowper, B. Harris: The Apocryphal Gospels. p. LXIV.
[3] James, M.R: The Apocryphal New Testament. p. 83.

is of very late compilation but that much of its content is also embodied in a syriac History of the Virgin,lately translated.[1] Donehoo says it is the most absurd of the gospels and highly Oriental. Different sections he compares and makes very similar to parts of the Protevangelium, certain Mohammed traditions, and the Thomas gospel. Many of the malevolent elements related in the Thomas gospel have been softened or eliminated altogehter. Donehoo also conjectures that the original may have been in the Coptic and of Catholic composition of about the tenth century. There may have been an older form which preceded this one.[2] Cowper says it divides itself into three divisions, these corresponding to the three sources from which it is derived. Chapters I-IX comprise the events beginning with the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethelem to be enrolled, and ending with the massacre of the children ordered by Herod. These chapters correspond to chaptersXVII-XXVof the Protevangelium,altho of course not in any exact or literal sense. Cowper thinks the second division, chapters X-XXXV,is the result of a vivid imagination and based on many Egyptian stories of fancy, invented with the idea of glorifying Mary as the chief administrator of this infant divine power. This section relates the incidnets which are supposed to have happened during the flight to Egypt, the sojourn there and the return.[3] Superstition must have been the basis of many of the strange and triv-

1 James, M.R. ;The Apocryphal New Testament .p.80
2.Donehoo, James De.Q.: The Apocryphal and Legendary Life of Christ. p. XXXIII
3.Coper, B. Harris: The Apocryphal Gospels. p. 176

ial happenings related. Idols fell to pieces and many were healed with the water in which Mary had washed Jesus or his clothes. In most of these healing stories the Virgin is the prominent figure. "They abode in Egypt three years and Jesus wrought many miracles, which are recorded neither in the gospel of the childhood, nor in the Evangelio perfecto."[1] The third section of the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, chapters XXXVI-LV is much like the gospel of Thomas. It records what is supposed to have happened from the time Jesus was seven years old until he was twelve. Now the miracles are performed by Jesus with a more definite consciousness of his power and through the will of his own. In the second part the miracles are of a benevolent character while those of this latter section take on a malevolent character similar to many of those in the Thomas gospel.

3. The Gospel of Thomas, or the Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus. (Greek form) Most authorities present this text in three principal forms, two Greek and one Latin. James thinks with Peeters that these different texts are all derived from an abbreviated Syriac version.[2] It is thought to rival the Protevangelium in point of time, probably dating back at least to the middle

1. Stowe, C.E.: Origin and History of Books of the Bible p. 233
2. James ,M.R. :The Apocryphal New Testament. p 49

Of the second century.Origen and Hippolytus both quote from a gospel of Thomas but it is not thought that they used the version of the gospel as it now stands.Donehoo says the present text contains Docetic, Gnostic,and Manichaean traces and that in other recensions of the text these traces have been blotted out to make it conform to Catholic orthodoxy.[1] It seems to have been highly favored by the early Catholic Churxh but was condemned by the second council of Nice in 787.This gospel gives the account of the sayings and doings,but especially of the miracles, of Jesus during his childhood up to the twelfth year.If these tales were invented to honor Jesus,they sadly failed that result for they represented Christ as having a malevolent disposition and a degraded character.His miracles show Him to have been petulant and revengeful-indeed there are but three or four miracles of mercy related."Throughout its pages the child is depicted(in the words of Renan) as'un gamin omnipotent et omniscient';wielding the power of the God-head with a child's waywardness and petulance. The character of Jesus as portrayed in this text is certainly unlike that we have learned to admire from the account in the New Testament".

CANONICAL SOURCES WHICH DEAL WITH THE NATIVITY

1 The gospel according to Matthew,is referred to as the first gospel of the early church.Irenaeus said as to its date and authorship,"Matthew,among the Hebrews,published a gospel in their own dialect".Papias,before Irenaeus, attributes a gospel tp Saint Matthew.[1] Streeter says that all four of the gospels were known in Rome by 155 A.D., but the gospel as we have it may not have been from the hand of the apostle,Matthew.Many authorities think it was written before the end of the first century after Christ's death.This first evangelist is often said to have been interested in the fulfilment of prophecy,(Matthew 5:17). Matthew gives the genealogy of Jesus,which he seems easily to trace back to Abraham(Matthew 1:1-17)Very briefly it refers to the espousal of Joseph and Mary.This is followed by another very brief account of the annunciation to them of the coming of a son,Jesus.It also gives a short story of the visit of the magi,and then the hurried flight into Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod.After an indefinite stay here they make the uneventful return to Nazareth.

[1] Hastings' Bible Dictionary of the Bible p.592.

[2] Streeter,Canon-- The Four Gospels.p.13.

2. The gospel according to Luke is often referred to as the third gospel in the early church. Most authorities agree that Luke, the companion of St. Paul, was the writer of this gospel and that it was written near the end of the first century, probably about 70 A.D.[1] Luke has a story all his own of the birth and childhood of Jesus (Luke 1:5-2:52). He gives the story of the annunciation of the birth of a son to Zacharias and Elizabeth and a few months later a similar kind of announcement to Mary. Luke 2 gives the story of Christ's birth, the adoration of the shepherds, the circumcision and return from Bethlehem to Nazareth.

GOSPEL SOURCES OF THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.

1. Matthew 2:13-23.

Here is given briefly the story of the flight into Egypt and the sojourn there until after the death of Herod. An angel announced the command to go to Egypt as did an angel announce the time of their return. Matthew then has Jesus living in Nazareth in fulfilment of Prophecy.

2. Luke 2:40-52.

After the return from Egypt, according to Luke's brief statement, Jesus grew and developed as would any normal child. He records the trip to Jerusalem at the age of twelve and his boyish interest in the work of the doctors round about the temple. Very simply he tells this story of the temple visit, his parents' return to look for him and their journey back to Nazareth. Luke also would have us believe that Jesus grew normally. (verse 52).

[1]Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible. p. 559.

This, in brief form, gives us a somewhat critical summary and appraisal of the main sources which we shall use as a basis of this study. We are now ready for a more intensive as well as extensive consideration of the thought content of these records.

CONTRAST AND COMPARISON OF MATERIAL

It is with great interest that we turn to these sources for their contribution to this early period in Jesus' life. To add to the completeness as well as the interest of our search something should be said of the material dealing with events before the birth of Jesus. It is of interest to compare the references to the genealogy of Jesus. Matthew and Luke both trace the genealogy through Joseph rather than Mary, the virgin. But their tracings of the ancestry of Jesus do not agree. Matthew carries it back through fourteen generations to Abraham while Luke takes it to Adam. (Mt. 1:1-17)(Lk. 3:23-37). In the gospel of the Nativity of Mary the ancestry is traced through Mary and Joachim, her father, a descendant of David. Some think that Mary's father was called Heli, thinking that Luke 3:23 means that, though Jerome called him Cleophas.[1]

1. Many of the apocryphal records pave the way for the coming of Jesus as shown by the stories of the pre-natal influences and events. These records have become a great part of the dogma of the Catholic Church. In these we find the story of the miraculous birth of Mary to Joachim and

[1] Cowper: Apocryphal Gospels. p. 3.

Anna. Donehoo says these names are but traditional ones,[1] and possibly suggested by the name of Hannah in I Samuel 1:2. According to most of these accounts Mary was miraculously conceived, dedicated to the temple at three, fed by an angel, and at fourteen was espoused to Joseph by a miraculous choice of rods, though she herself wished always to remain a virgin.[2] It is interesting to note that these stories give Zacharias, the priest, much of the responsibility of Mary's upbringing but Luke does not mention this although he tells of Zacharias and his position as priest (Lk ;:5).

When we compare the gospel stories of the annunciation to Mary we find they are more nearly parallel. In the Protevangelium and Pseudo-Matthew the annunciation takes place at the fountain in Nazareth where Mary has gone to draw water. (This is often represented in art). However it is more usual for the apocryphal stories to represent Mary as receiving the annunciation while working on her purple cloth in her own bedchamber. In Matthew the angel appears to Joseph in a dream and makes the annunciation (Mt. ;:20) while in Luke (;:26ff) the angel comes in to Mary.

The date of the annunciation is widely commemorated on March twenty-fifth. Tradition has it that it is also the date of the crucifixion,[3]

Another interesting event which undoubtedly had a great effect upon Mary at this time was the annunciation which had been made to Zacharias and Elizabeth of the coming of a son who was to bear the name of John. The

[1] Donehoo: Apocryphal and Legendary Life of Christ. p.2
[2] Protevangelium 1-5; Pseudo-Matthew 1-3; Nativity of Mary ;-5; Sahidic Fragments 1.
[3] Donehoo: The Apocryphal and Legendary Life of Christ. p. 37.

apocryphal gospels are much more elaborate in their relating of the story. Zacharias and the angel have a lengthy conversation which ends with the request from Zacharias that he be given a sign. As a result he is dumb for three days although Luke's record gives it as a longer period (Luke ;:20-24). Some legends say that John was conceived by the chaste kisses that Zacharias imprinted on the lips of Elizabeth.[1] The Protevangelium and Luke agree in many of the details of Mary's visit to Elizabeth. Both say she was here about three months. (Lk. 1: 39) (Prote. ch. XII). Matthew gives nothing about the birth of John or of Mary's visit to Elizabeth. The age of Mary at this time is given differently by the apocryphal writers while Matthew and Luke are altogether silent. James and some others say she was sixteen while with others it varies from fourteen to eighteen.[2] The length of time she spent with the other virgins in the house of Joseph also varies with the writers.

Luke gives no record of Joseph's adverse attitude toward Mary and Matthew just hints at an attitude of questioning and distress. Some of the apocryphal writers give an elaborate account of Joseph's attitude.[3] Joseph returns from his work of carpentering and discovers Mary's pregnancy. He reproaches her and questions the virgins, who protest her innocence. He determines to put her away secretly but has a dream in which an angel reassures him and announces to him the miraculous conception. (Matthew's story is very similar. Mt. 1:19-25). The news spreads to the temple and Mary and Joseph are summoned to appear before the priests. Both are put through a severe questioning by the High

[1] Donehoo: Apocryphal and Legendary Life of Christ. p. 36.
[2] Cowper: Apocryphal Gospels. p. 14.
[3] Protevangelium XIII-XVI: Pseudo-Matthew X-XII.

Priest and then subjected to the ordeal of water to show their guilt or innocence. Much to the surprise of the people both are proved innocent. Then follows much rejoicing and exultation for these who are so much acclaimed of God. It may be wondered why all the sentimental enlarging and exaggeration of the story. Donehoo suggests that it may have been to enhance and glorify the character of Mary.[1]

2. The Apocryphal stories of the Nativity are greatly embellished with details and many miraculous circumstances, wholly unlike the simple, straight-forward narrative of Luke and the briefly stated fact of the birth as mentioned by Matthew. Matthew does not say where Mary gave birth to the child, but Luke would have us believe it was in a stable. "And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." Luke 2:7. Many of the apocryphal stories say that Mary and Joseph went to a cave not far from Bethlehem. Other legends refer to the cave as found in the writings of Origen, Eusebius and Jerome. On this night of Jesus' birth many miraculous events are said to have happened. When Mary entered the dark cave the light of God shone round about her and as long as she was there it remained lighted. Roman tradition makes the birth occur while Mary was kneeling with her face to the East--she suffered no pain and her virginity was unbroken.[2] Jesus immediately stood on his feet while angels sang praises. Signs and wonders appeared in many parts of the world. The temple of Janus

[1] Donehoo pp. 36-44
[2] Donehoo p. 51

was shut in fulfilment of the song of the angels which declared peace on earth. The temple of Apollo at Rome fell down and a fountain beyond the Tiber flowed oil instead of water, while in Egypt many idols were thrown down. A star, brighter than all the others, and in the shape of a wheel, shone over the cave--light from it was in the shape of a cross and on the cross were the words, "This is Jesus, the Son of God". One of the midwives, whom Joseph brought, was afflicted with paralysis and when she obeyed Mary's command to place her hands upon the child, she was healed. The other midwife, doubting Mary's virginity and touching her found she had a withered hand. An angel, seeing her repentance, caused her to touch the child whereupon her hand was healed.[1]

The adoration of the shepherds is given very little detail in the apocryphal stories. In some, the shepherds are named, some naming four, others only three. Both the apocryphal stories and the story by Luke give us the angel's song as heard by the shepherds. Matthew gives no record of the coming of the shepherds though he gives us the story of the coming of the magi from afar. A comparison of the angel's song, as given by our two sources, shows the greater beauty to be in the version by Luke.[2] Donehoo gives us the translation of the apocryphal record. "There hath been born the Savior of all, who is Christ the Lord, in whom salvation shall be brought to Israel." The song in Luke is, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men". The whole story as related by Luke is much more rich in detail, with a simple,

[1] Donehoo. p. 57.
[2] Donehoo. p. 58.

almost reverent narrating of the miraculous elements.

Some writers have it in their record that Mary left the cave after the third day and went to a stable where she placed Jesus in a manger. Herein Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his masters crib".[1] This tradition is universally known and in many of the pictures of the nativity the artists have represented the ox and the ass. This is but one striking illustration of how apocryphal tales were founded on Old Testament stories and texts.

Our sources are found to differ in their statements as to the time when Jesus was taken to Jerusalem. Both agree that the circumcision was on the eighth day and the official taking of the name Jesus was at that time. Luke says that after the time of Mary's purification was accomplished, they brought the child to Jerusalem. Pseudo-Matthew says that ten days after the circumcision they went to Jerusalem and there waited for the passing of the forty days. Again both agree that the commandment of Moses was carried out in the offering of sacrifices at the time of the presentation. After this ceremony there followed the individual adorations of Simeon and the aged Anna. Some differences have been pointed out in the characters of these two as given by our groups of source material. In the apocryphal writings Simeon's age is given as one hundred and twelve but Luke does not in any way infer that he was of so great an age (Lk 2:25-38). In some traditions Simeon is said to have doubted the prophecy in Isaiah about the virgin bringing forth a son. But at the time of his seeing Jesus he believed and accepted the Old

[1]Isaiah 1:3.

Testament promise and himself makes a prophecy concerning Jesus' share in the "rise and fall of many in Israel".[1] Luke seems to think the total age of Anna was eighty-four while the apocryphal writers have made it much greater and state that the period of her widow-hood was eighty-four years. Otherwise the stories of their adorations are very parallel.

A comparison of the stories of the coming of the magi shows the apocryphal accounts have many more details and circumstances. In most of the accounts nothing indicates the age of Jesus at the time of the visit of the magi but in these it would seem that it was very early in the infancy. Pseudo-Matthew however says that the magi came when Jesus' second year was past.[2] The Apocryphal account of the journey is very similar to that of Matthew but with more unnatural details. We find they agree that the wise men came to Jerusalem and inquired for the new king of the Jews and before long were called by Herod for questioning about their story. He then sent them to Bethlehem with this command, "Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also". They went their way, guided by the star until they came to the cave where they worshipped him and "presented unto him gifts; gold and frankincense and myrrh. But when they left they returned into their own country by another way because they had been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod.[3] The Arabic gospel of the Infancy (ch. VII) makes the coming of the magi a fulfilment of the prophecy of Zoraster. These men had a book of these prophecies that had been handed down from the time of Adam's

[1] Donehoo. p. 61.
[2] Cowper. p. 55.
[3] Matthew 2:1-12.

son, Seth. The tradition is universal that there were three magi. Matthew does not state the number but leaves that inference on account of the three gifts named. From Persian legend came the names, Melchior, a man of sixty, who brought the gold which signified a gift to Christ as king: Gaspar a youth of twenty who brought the incense which signified a gift to Christ as God; the third was Balthasar, a man of forty, who brought the myrrh, which signified a gift to the son of man about to die.[1] Legends differ as to the length of time these men were journeying and how old Christ was when they came. Some say the star appeared at the time of the nativity and that they were two years making the journey. Donehoo says this may have been done to account for Herod's command that the children two years old and under should be slain.[2] Nor does Matthew settle it for us. Many unnatural details are recorded by these later writers--some say neither rest nor sleep were required, that the star grew brighter and appeared to them as a bird flying, white within it was the form and likeness of a young child. According to some, the star fell into the well at Bethlehem when the journey was ended, and it can still be seen there by the pure in heart.[3] Pseudo-Matthew and the Arabic gospel tell of the giving of great gifts to Mary and Joseph and that Mary in return gave them a part of Jesus' garment. On their return a great celebration fire was kindled for their worship and this band was thrown in but would not burn. Our own gospel narrative simply states that they returned home another way. Much credit is given Mary in many of these crude stories. Some even break their story to tell us of

[1] Donehoo. p. 70.
[2] Donehoo. p. 71.
[3] Donehoo. p. 74.

Mary," that she had long hands and a body somewhat delicate; her colour was like that of ripe wheat; and she was round of face and had her hair bound up".[1]

Our comparison of the stories of the Nativity shows again the tendency to elaborate and add such details as to make them almost of negligible interest. They seem crude, unnatural and impossible, even to vivid imaginations of today.

As we turn to the sources once more, this time for enlightenment on the childhood of Jesus, we wonder if there we will find any usable stories. Thus far we have gleaned little that is of any great consequence in penetrating the shadow which hides the period of which we desire so much to know.

The apocryphal accounts and the record of our own gospel narrator, Matthew, agree that Herod planned to destroy Jesus. Some legends say that he even burned all the ships of Tarshish because he thought the magi had embarked on them and he had determined to kill them for their trickery. Matthew says that when Herod saw he had been mocked by the magi he was very (much) wroth. He then gave the order that all the male children in Bethlehem two years old and under should be slain. Thus he would destroy this one who was to rival him as King. Very simply both sources tell of the dream message Joseph had from the angel who told him to take his family to Egypt and thus escape from Herod. These episodes, the flight into Egypt and the massacre of the children, have often been

[1]Donehoo. p. 74.

represented by artists. The church commemorates the massacre of the Innocents on December 28, following the general tradition that it was two years and three days after the Nativity.[1] The usual apocryphal view is that Jesus was two years old. Those writers who say the magi came soon after the Nativity must be ready to answer the question as to why Herod delayed his attempt so long. Donehoo says it is sometimes accounted for by various traditions.[2] One is that Herod was on a visit to Rome. Some say he had to get the Emperor's permission to slay the children, and this caused the delay.

The Protevangeluim gives the account of the miraculous escape of Elizabeth and her little son John. Luke makes no direct statement about their flight but we would infer from his words that they too had fled from Bethlehem to escape Herod's wrath. "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." (Luke 2:80) James says they have travelled until weary and Elizabeth asks the mountain to protect them. An angel then commands the mountain to open and the mountain obeys and there they are cared for by angels until a safe time for them to again appear. Then our protevangel takes us back to the temple where Herod's officers question Zacharias about his son John. When Zacharias can tell them nothing Herod commands that he be killed before dawn and at the altar. The people mourn for him three days and the priests put Simeon in his place. The New Testament writers tell us nothing of such an incident and we feel that it has been crudely enlarged upon by the imagination of these other writers.

[1] Donehoo. p. 78.
[2] Donehoo. p. 78.

Luke gives nothing of the flight into Egypt; rather we gather from his account that Mary and Joseph took Jesus back to Nazareth soon after the circumcision. (Lk. 2:39) Matthew says only that Joseph took Mary and Jesus and went by night to Egypt and remained there until Herod died. But when we read the version as given by the apocryphal writers we find chronicled many miraculous events and circumstances which are crude, even disgusting and impossible. And we can only wonder why the utter distortion of a baby character! Where the gain?

The first of these grotesque wonders was the miracle by which Jesus thwarted the attempt of Herod's soldiers to catch up with them as they fled. On the way they found a laborer who was sowing wheat. Jesus put his hand in the sack and threw out a handful of wheat. Immediately it grew to its full growth. When Herod's soldiers came they asked the laborer if a woman, carrying a child, had passed that way. The laborer said, "Yes, when I was sowing this wheat". So the soldiers turned back and Jesus had saved the day!

Our narrators would show us that God's creation recognized Jesus as perfect and one to be obeyed. This is evidenced on the journey by the way the vegetable kingdom and the animal world and even evil spirits heeded his every word and obeyed him. While Mary and Joseph and others in the company seemed to have great fear of the wild animals they saw, Jesus knew no fear and caused them to marvel at his power over the animals. While they were resting in a cave many dragons are said to have come from the cave. All but Jesus were greatly frightened. He

boldly went among them and commanded that they hurt no one. Mary and Joseph both expressed fear whereupon Jesus improved the opportunity to boast of his perfection and power. "Fear not, nor consider me to be a little child, for I am, and always have been perfect; and all the wild beasts of the forest must needs be tame before me."[1] As they continued on their journey, other wild animals were tamed by Jesus' appearance. Jesus assured Mary that they would not harm but would come to be of service. And they went among the sheep, the rams and the oxen without trying to harm any.

As Jesus was able to control the animal world so are we led to believe he could exert supreme power over the vegetable world and the forces of nature. Pseudo-Matthew tells us that on the third day Mary was very tired from the heat of the desert.[2] While resting under a palm tree she expressed a desire for the fruit of the tree. Joseph seemed surprised that she should desire such an impossible thing. He however was thinking of their need for water. Jesus realized their need and helplessness and answered to both their desires. He commanded the palm to bend down and they gathered the fruit and rested under its shade until Jesus commanded it to rise up again. Then he commanded that a spring should send up water at the foot of the tree and all the company and their cattle and beasts were satisfied. As a reward to the tree he announced that one of its branches was to be planted in paradise. Then he said that from that time on the palm should be recognized as the symbol of victory.[3] This cannot have been the beginning of such

[1]Cowper: Apocryphal Gospels. p. 58.
[2]Pseudo-Matthew Ch. 20.
[3]Donehoo. p. 86.

a custom for long before the time of Christ it had already been recognized as such. It is a good example of the tendency to give a supernatural origin even to already recognized customs. The above stories accentuate Jesus' fearlessness and power by contrast to the fear and helplessness of ordinary people under similar circumstances. Even Mary's and Joseph's human qualities are made to serve as a foil to show up the wonder-working, spell-casting character of this little child Jesus, as many of these writers have represented Him.

Another extreme view of Jesus' great power is shown in the story of his shortening the journey to Egypt. Joseph by this time seemed to depend on the judgment and will of Jesus for he conferred with him in regard to continuing their course through the desert. Indeed, he practically asked Jesus if they should not take the course near the sea because of the excessive heat farther inland. Jesus, however had another solution, showing again this superior mind and power. "Fear not, Joseph I will shorten the way for you, so that what ye would have taken thirty days to go over, ye shall accomplish in this 'one day." And even as they looked forward they could see the mountains and cities of Egypt.[1] Donehoo says that this idea of the shortening of the journey might have been suggested by the account of the lengthening of Israel's journey from Egypt on account of sin. This was the journey of the sinless one which would bring about the contrast.[2] It would seem that Jesus had tried out his powers during thisjourney and now knew what he could do. Entering into Egypt, their very presence

[1] Cowper. p. 62.
[2] Donehoo. p. 87.

caused great agitation and excitement among the people. The three hundred and fifty-five idols in the temple fell and were shattered when Mary and Jesus entered the temple. The priests in terror went to the head idol and asked the meaning and explanation. He answered that the one true God had entered--the Only One worthy of Divine worship and the true Son of God. Thus did our narrator bear out the prophecy of Isaiah, "Behold the Lord will come upon a swift cloud, and will enter Egypt, and all the handiwork of the Egyptians shall be moved at His presence".[1]

Pseudo-Matthew does not relate any more miraculous events in Egypt--indeed we infer that it was not long after the destruction of the idols as given above, that an angel appeared to Joseph telling him to return to Judah. In the Protevangelium the story ends with the slaughter of the Innocents but the Gospel of the Infancy relates many incidents supposed to have happened during the sojourn in Egypt. Here we have the story of the first healing in Egypt--the son of the priest who attended the chief idol in the temple. He was possessed by demons. Coming into the temple he touched some of the freshly washed garments of Jesus which Mary had hung up to dry. Immediately the charm worked and the demons left the boy. The father and all those about worshipped this boy who was declared the son of God and for whom idols fell down. The Arabic Gospel narrator here allowed the human fears to dominate. Mary and Joseph were afraid that trouble would arise over the broken idols so they fled to another place. A band of robbers, abandoned their stolen

[1]Donehoo. p. 89.

goods and their captives at the approach of the party. As they journeyed from place to place many miracles were made to happen, never by Joseph but often shared by Mary and Jesus. These are crude and offensive and altogether on a low level of proceedure.

In the account of the Birth of John and the Death of Zacharias, which is of an ancient apocryphal text of Gnostic origin,[1] we have an extraordinary happening.[2] Jesus is said to have come from Egypt with the angel Gabriel, to the temple at Jerusalem. He commanded the angel to appear with John from the mountain where he was in hiding. Jesus commanded a fountain to spring up in which he baptized both John and the restored Zacharias. Then Zacharias was made to sleep and angels buried him before the altar. This having been finished Jesus and the angel returned to Egypt and John and his angel went back to the mountain. Following this there occured many miracles during the time they remained in Egypt. Many of these seemed to have gained for them their chief means of provision and sustenance as well as shelter. In many of the accounts as given by the Arabic gospel of the Infancy, miraculous acts were performed soon after entering a community and they were rewarded with great honor and royal entertainment as well as provision for the new journey ahead.[3] After healing the demoniac woman the chief people of the city entertained them and supplied their needs when they left the next day. Coming into a city where a marriage was being celebrated, the bride was enabled to hear and speak again by touching and holding Jesus. They were treated royally, this time for three days when again they had

[1] Donehoo. p. XXXVIII
[2] Donehoo. p. 91.
[3] Cowper. pp. 181-201.

things provided for the advance journey. In another city a girl afflicted with leprosy, had Jesus' bath water poured over her body and she was cured of her disease. Here, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus were all three given praise and declared to be Gods. This girl, healed of the leprosy, begged to go with them and it seems that through her influence Jesus made contacts with others who needed cures. She inquired of three sorrowing women why they grieved. They asked the party to go home with them for the night, and ~~them~~ they would show Jesus the reason for their grief. They arrived at the home and were taken to a certain room. Here they found a mule standing. They kissed and cried over this mule and finally explained that it was their brother, turned into a mule by the witchcraft of some women. At Lady Mary's words to Jesus to heal this mule, a miracle was again performed and the mule changed into the brother. Here the adoration and praise was given to Mary who had answered their need for a magician and an enchanter.[1]

Their journey then led them to a desert part of the country infested with robbers so they decided to travel through it by night. They came upon the robbers, but the two leaders of the band decided to do no harm to the travelers. Mary then promised that they should have remission of their sins. Jesus, however, was made by our narrator to use this as an opportunity to prophesy happenings thirty years away--"After thirty years, O mother, the Jews will crucify me at Jerusalem, and these two robbers will be lifted on the cross with me, Titus at my right hand and Dumachus at my left, and after that day Titus shall go before me into

[1]Cowper. p. 187.

Paradise".[1]

After many months of traveling and sojourning at many places; after many exploits of power over human beings, animals and the forces of nature; after grotesque and unbelievable miracles were accomplished by a mere showing of hands and the expert use of their great power, this wonder-working group proceeded to Memphis, the seat of Egypt's government. Our apocryphal writers say that there they visited Pharaoh but this could scarcely be possible for Egypt was then under Roman rule. Our writers do not agree as to the length of time the Holy Family was in Egypt. The History of Joseph the carpenter records that they were there one whole year, while Herod's jealousy passed away. The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy says it was three years and Donehoo is inclined to think this best accords with general apocryphal statements and literature.[2] Many others say from five, six or seven years.

Luke says nothing about the sojourn in Egypt, and therefore gives nothing about the return. Matthew says nothing about the length of time, except that they were there until the death of Herod, when an angel came to Joseph in a dream, telling him to return to Israel. Joseph found that Herod's son was ruler and he was afraid to return to his former home so he took them to Nazareth. Our canonical writers do not give us any hint as to what Jesus or his parents were doing while in Egypt, least of all do they make Him the child sorcerer or magician that we find in the apocryphal gospels.[3] In these latter accounts it is said that Jesus was fed every day by an angel from heaven, dry sticks put into the earth by Him became living trees and his own clay birds

[1] Cowper. p. 190.
[2] Donehoo. p. 107.
[3] Matthew 2:16-23.

made at play, breathed upon by Him, flew into the air and away.[1] Such is the exhibition they give us during these few years in Egypt. And even their accounts do not cover all the acts and miracles--"and the Lord Jesus wrought very many miracles in Egypt, which are not found written either in the Gospel of the Infancy nor in the perfect Gospel." This statement is much like the ending of the gospel of John. "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Donehoo says that the 'perfect gospel' mentioned above is the four gospels as we have them in the New Testament,[2] and that the writer certainly did not hold the apocryphal gospels on the same level as he did the four canonical gospels.

In comparing our sources in regard to the story of the return we may notice at least one conflicting detail. Matthew says the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream while Pseudo-Matthew says he appeared to Joseph; the Gospel of Thomas has the angel appear only to Mary. Donehoo says many of our legend writers have the angel meet both Mary and Joseph and instruct them to return again to Israel. Practically all agree on the definiteness of their return to Nazareth. In none of the legends do we find any elaborate details of the return to Israel. Many agree that Joseph quietly resumed his work at the carpenter bench.[3]

The apocryphal stories of Jesus as a young boy in Nazareth are very elaborate, while in contrast, our canonical gospels are wholly silent until the time when Jesus was twelve years old and Luke makes a summarizing

[1] Donehoo. p. 107.
[2] Donehoo. p. 107.
[3] Cowper. p. 107.

statement about his normal four-fold development. This will be discussed later when we consider the later childhood years.

Thomas the Israelite and Pseudo-Matthew record many early childhood miracles; strange happenings while Jesus helped his father, played with other children and attended school. Much fear he must have struck into the minds of his playfellows and likewise the minds of their parents by the many reputed demonstrations of His power--power often used for evil and revenge as well as for good. One would think he had been reared in the home of Joseph as a spoiled and pampered only child if many of these stories were to be taken as truth. We must consider some of these accounts in detail if we are to understand their full implications. When Jesus was four years old, one Sabbath he played along the bank of the Jordan. Jesus had made seven little pools of mud, connected by channels through which, at his command, water flowed in and out. Another boy came along and closed up these channels and Jesus with his words of rebuke caused him to fall dead. The parents came and complained to Mary and Joseph who in turn questioned Jesus. Mary was afraid such an act would cause great hatred from these people, and Jesus seeing this, kicked the dead body and commanded it to arise. Jesus had no grief or compassion but seemingly only pleasure over his great display of power as he turned to his play and commanded the water to again flow through the channels into the pools. Gloatingly he seemed to accept his victory.[1]

Some of Jesus' playful acts and words received great condemnation

[1]Cowper. p. 64.

and opposition by the parents of some of Jesus' playmates. Indeed they severely criticized Joseph and advised him to get the child to lead a more prayerful and devout life as a way to lessen his blasphemous words and deeds. One occasion for this was the making of the twelve sparrows on the Sabbath. This is given in the fourth chapter of the gospel of Thomas.[1] Thomas says it was when Jesus was five years old and on a rainy day that he picked up some clay and made twelve sparrows. It was on the Sabbath and his playmates reported it to Joseph who questioned Jesus as to why he should so violate the Sabbath. Jesus did not answer his father but commanded the sparrows to fly,"and they flew up and began with a cry, to praise Almighty God". Whereupon a Pharisee standing near took an olive branch and disturbed the pool of water and clay banks which Jesus had made. Jesus said, "Impious and ignorant man of Sodom, what wrong have the pools of water, my works, done to thee? Behold thou shalt become as a dry tree, nor having roots, nor leaves, nor fruit"; and straightway he was withered and fell to the earth, dead. Then the people denounced Joseph for having such an ill-tempered son and criticized his training in the home. This is but one of the many incidents given by these various writers which characterize Jesus as having been of a very vindictive and revengeful nature.

Jesus greatly enjoyed the awesome affect his miracles had upon his playmates, if we accept the many stories recorded of his youthful demonstrations to them. One story, as given in the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, certainly characterizes him as one who gloated in his power,

[1]Cowper. p. 156.

which was so much greater than that of his companions. With such a dominating, boastful spirit we wonder that he kept many playmates or had any friends. He was always belittling their accomplishments and boasting of his own--and this attitude held over in his relation with grown people as well. When Jesus was seven years old, he and his playmates were making animals and birds of clay. Each was trying to outdo the other. Finally Jesus climaxed the demonstration by making his animals walk and his birds fly. They even ate and drank when he commanded. The boys told their parents who instructed them not to play with Jesus because he was a sorcerer. Children and parents both were afraid of his power.[1]

On another day the boys were playing and came to the shop of a dyer. There were many pieces of cloth hung up ready to dye. Jesus came in and put all these pieces in one vessel of Indian blue dye. When the dyer came and saw what had been done he scolded and rebuked Jesus for ruining his business. Then Jesus began taking out the cloths and each piece was dyed the color intended. It was a great miracle and they considered him a prodigy of God. Perhaps one of the most distorted imaginings of Jesus' wonderworking is found in another of the apocryphal childhood stories. "On another day Jesus went out into the road, and saw the boys that had come together to play, and followed them; but the boys hid themselves from him. Jesus came to the door of a certain house and asked some women there where the boys had gone; they told him they were not there. Then Jesus asked what it was that was in the fur-

[1]Cowper. p. 202.

nace and they replied that they were kids three years old. Jesus then called out, "Come out hither, O kids, to your shepherd". Then the boys, in the form of kids, came out and began to dance round him. The women were frightened and begged him to restore their children to them again. They said they knew he was a good shepherd of Israel. Jesus then said, "Come, boys, let us go and play". And the kids were changed into boys.

Pseudo-Matthew narrates an incident supposed to have happened in Jericho. But no other documents assume that any part of the infancy was passed in Jericho.[1] At the time Jesus was eight years old he went down from Jericho to the Jordan. And he went into a cavern where a lioness and her young were known to live. The lions ran to meet him and the young ones played with him. The people were alarmed and said his parents must have sinned greatly or Jesus would not have so exposed himself to harm. But while they were being sorrowful, Jesus came out, followed by the lions. Then Jesus made a lesson out of it for the people--"the beasts recognized their Lord and worship Him, but those made in the image and likeness of God know Him not."[2] And so our writers would make Jesus, even in his hours of play, a character separate and apart from his playmates. Even so, they have given him many of the characteristics shown in childhood of today. Often he displayed a riot of temper and spasms of jealousy--he became angry when corrected or criticized and had the same desire to dominate and control that children exhibit today. And although the character of Jesus is overdrawn and inflated with the highly miraculous, these writers do much in another sense to characterize

[1]Donehoo. p. 120.
[2]Cowper. p. 77.

Jesus as very much a normal boy. His miracles were performed in the natural setting of a childish play life which shows that He lived under normal conditions. Grotesque and disgusting elements are made to grow out of these normal conditions but the very fact that there was a normal condition makes us believe that there was also a normalcy of character.

And Jesus, as a boy, worked with his father in the carpenter shop. Joseph was getting to be an old man and often made mistakes in his work. The Arabic Gospel says that he was not a very skillful carpenter although the contrary statement is made in other documents.[1] According to these accounts, it made little difference if Joseph did make errors in his work for Jesus was always able to set a wrong thing right. How Joseph must have rejoiced in having a son who could change his works of error into works of perfection. Through Jesus, Joseph was able to keep his business in good standard and keep his customers. When Joseph went to repair tools or homes or to do any building he took Jesus with him. And many times Jesus, with a word or a gesture was able to make an article just as Joseph wished it to be. A great many such incidents are recorded in the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy and Pseudo-Matthew.[2] Joseph was once hired to make a couch six cubits long. Jesus cut one part longer than the other and Joseph became angry. Then Jesus needed to right himself in the eyes of his father and seized the opportunity to display His power. He instructed Joseph to hold the end of the short piece and he took the other and in pulling the shorter piece it became

[1] Donehoo. p. 112.
[2] Cowper. p. 78; Donehoo, pp. 111,112,113.

as long as the other. The mistake made right he told Joseph to continue the work and finish it for the man as he had agreed to do.

Another time Joseph had worked two years on a throne for the king at Jerusalem. When he went to put up the throne he found that it did not fit the place where it belonged. The king was very angry and Joseph was very much worried. Jesus again came to the rescue and told him to take hold of one end and he would take hold of the other. When they had both drawn hard on their parts the throne was exactly right and all who witnessed it were astonished at such a miracle. Again Jesus had saved the reputation of his father! But what a crude and distorted character Jesus is in the hands of such writers--surely they were ignorant of the true spirit of Jesus. Could such a one answer to the inner needs of man and fulfil the life of the Spirit?

Throughout these records Jesus is portrayed as one who, even as a child, far surpassed all other human beings in wisdom, in power and in works. As he cast a spell over animals, men and forces of nature and brought them under his will to do his bidding, so too he had the triumphant control over disease and sickness. This child-miracle-worker is made to heal diseases of both mind and body. Accounts are given of how Jesus healed two boys from bites of serpents. James, his older brother, had been sent to the garden to gather vegetables. A viper bit him and he cried out and fell to the ground as dead. Jesus took him by the hand and breathed upon the wound and James revived and the serpent at the same time died. Donehoo says this virtue of Christ's

breathing as a healing power was a belief of the Persians. And in John 20:22 we find the reference to Christ's breathing on the apostles that they might receive the Holy Ghost.[1] The other story made Jesus have power over the poison from the serpent and over the serpent itself in a very extreme manner. A boy had been bitten by a serpent while getting eggs from the nest of a partridge. His playmates heard him cry out and found him lying on the ground like one dead. The parents of the boy started to carry him to the city but the boys took them, much against their will, to Jesus. Jesus instead of attending to the boy at once, wanted all to go with him to kill the snake first. So all the party were forced to go where the snake was. Jesus commanded the snake to come out and suck out the poison it had infused into the boy. The serpent obeyed and then when Jesus cursed it, it burst asunder and died. And then Jesus stroked the boy and he was healed. When the boy began to weep Jesus said, "Weep not, for by and by thou shalt be my disciple". Then the story ends by saying, "And this is Simon the Canaanite of whom mention is made in the gospel." Here there is added to his power to heal, the power to foretell and prophesy. Donehoo says,"the writer of this gospel is here introducing gospel characters which he delights in doing".[2] In Matthew 10:4 we find mention made of Simon the Canaanite as one of the twelve disciples. In Mark, Luke and Acts we also find mention made of one Simon, a disciple. But why this child was fore-ordained to be a disciple we do not know nor is it acceptable to us that Jesus could foretell the events of the far distant future.

[1] Donehoo. p. 125.
[2] Donehoo. p. 124.

Jesus is said to have brought to life a neighbor boy who died. He smote him on the breast and commanded him to rise. This miracle was evidently performed before a crowd, for "the multitude gave him praise, 'In truth this is a heavenly child, for he hath already freed many souls from death, and saved all that hoped in him'". This is the last miracle recorded by Thomas and it is interesting to note that in it he again brings in a great deal of praise and honor to Mary, "the mother of such a glorious child".

The Gospel of Thomas and the Arabic gospel give another story of how Jesus restored life. Jesus and some other boys were one day playing on the housetop. One of the boys fell down and died of his injuries. All the frightened boys fled except Jesus. When the parents came they blamed Jesus for the boy's death. He denied it and said they would ask the boy to speak and tell who did it. Jesus then asked him, "Zeno, Zeno, who cast thee down from the housetop?". Then the boy answered, "Lord, thou didst not cast me down; but such a one pushed me off". The story ends with these words, "And when Jesus had bidden those who stood there to observe his words, all who were present praised God for this miracle".[1] We might ask a question concerning this miracle, as we might of many of the others. Why did Jesus perform this miracle? Was it to restore life; was it to vindicate himself of all blame for the death; was it to gain glory and praise by a demonstration of his power before a crowd of people? If it was to restore life and not the desire to show off his power why did not he immediately heal him before his

[1] Cowper. pp. 162, 209.

parents or the crowd had come? We only wonder what the author of such a story intended it to do! If these tales were invented to honor Jesus they certainly fail to achieve that result today. Degrading, malevolent, motives and petulant attitudes clearly set forth by many of these accounts are certainly unlike the characteristics which we have learned to admire in the Jesus of our New Testament Gospels.

Many of the infancy miracles performed in Egypt were credited to the influence of Mary. The method of cure used there was the bathing of the sufferer in the bath water of Jesus or possessing some garment worn by Him. According to some of the authors this same method was again used during Jesus' childhood days at Bethlehem.[1] Many children at Bethlehem were sick with disease of the eyes which caused blindness. Two mothers brought their children to Mary and asked her help. They were given the water in which Jesus had been bathed and when this was used the cure was accomplished. In the one instance the mother was commanded to tell no one of this miracle. Donehoo says this incident is founded on the passages found in Matthew 8:4; 9:30; and 12:16, where Jesus in his ministry charged the people not to tell of their restoration.

Grown people were also cured by using the bath water. Two women were so healed of leprosy. One had been divorced by her husband because of her disease but when she was cured he took her back.

Another New Testament character who is made to have contact with Jesus during his childhood is that of Judas Iscariot. This is given in the Arabic Gospel.[2] Judas was tormented by Satan and his mother came

[1] Donehoo. p. 129.
[2] Cowper. p. 201.

to Mary for help. Judas went up to Jesus and struck him "whereupon Satan left the boy in the form of a mad dog". Why the story? Was it to glorify the character of Jesus or to blacken the character of Judas? It evidently finds its basis in the New Testament story of the betrayal of Jesus at the hands of Judas.

Pseudo-Matthew would have his readers believe that Jesus' miracles had caused hatred and enmity of the home-town people. He says that Mary and Joseph removed to Capernaum because of the hostility of the people. He records that after their removal there, a certain rich man named Joseph, died. Jesus knew of the sorrowing over this death and asked his father why he did not help him who was of his name. Joseph answered that he had no power to help but Jesus told his father, "Take the kerchief which is upon thy head, and go and put it on the face of the dead, and say to him 'Christ save thee!' and forthwith he will be saved, and the dead shall rise from his bed". Joseph did this and the dead man arose from his bed and inquired for Jesus. And after this our writer has the family return to Bethlehem. Most of the apocryphal writers say nothing of the family having moved to Bethlehem but they have the ordinary habitation at Nazareth.

In the miracles thus far related by our many apocryphal writers we seem to find a mixture of motive and intent. Jesus is characterized as a child who used a great power either for good or ill to please his own dictates. In many of his acts the malevolent and destructive motives were dominant. Donehoo has put these incidents under the chapter heading, "Destructive miracles of Christ's Childhood".[1] We will relate a

[1] Donehoo p. 139.

few of the outstanding ones in order to see the development of his character as these writers have tried to portray it. Reference has already been made to the story of the pools of water and mud channels Jesus had made in his play; how a playmate destroyed them and Jesus in anger caused him to die. Then as the hatred of the Jews gathered against Joseph and Mary, Jesus brought the boy back to life.

Another time a boy ran against Jesus and knocked him down. It so angered Jesus that he said the boy should not go farther and that he too should fall down but would not get up again. The boy fell to the ground and died. Then the parents and the crowd which gathered rebuked Joseph for having such a son. When Joseph reproved Jesus, he answered that these evil-doers would have their punishment. When the people heard this they came against Joseph, more angry than before. But as they began to speak against Jesus they became blind. "Joseph was angry and seized Jesus and pinched him by the ear. Jesus was very angry with his father and said, "It is enough for thee to seek and not to find, to see me and not to touch me. For thou knowest not who I am; but if thou didst know thou wouldst not make me angry. Although just now I am with thee, and am 'hine, I was made before thee. It is enough for thee to command me and control me, most certainly thou hast acted without knowledge". Then Jesus took the boy by the ear and lifted him up and commanded him to breathe and he revived.[1] And such a story of satisfied whims and caprice was written to do honor to Jesus!

Donehoo has used another type of story, written he says, by a medieval legend-monger. These are not found in the general apocryphal writings but are taken from Enfance de Notre-Seigneus, Migne vol. II, col. 380.[2]

[1] Donehoo. p. 144.
[2] Donehoo. p. 145ff.

One of these stories tells how Jesus came to the place where an old woman was working at the making of pots and tiles--the woman spoke to him crossly. When she left her workshop for a time, Jesus went in and destroyed the tiles and pots. The woman knew he had done it and she went to Mary and angrily denounced Jesus, saying he had done her great injury. Jesus denied it and said for his mother to go to the shop with this woman and see. When the women came to the shop they found pots and tiles far more beautiful than any this woman had made and "more than twelve workmen could have made in fifteen days".

Another story which is given seems to be a more elaborate and greatly expanded form of the foregoing story. One morning Jesus was walking and came to a factory where many men were making tiles. Jesus helped these men all day and a great amount of work was accomplished. At night after they had finished, the workmen were ashamed that they had not paid him anything--they had not even asked the boy to eat with them. They all said they would repay him if they ever found him and went home much pleased with the day's work. But Jesus had remained hidden in the factory and after they had gone he began breaking the tiles and pots and he destroyed them all. Mary and Joseph were much worried for it was late and he had been gone all day. When He came they questioned him and he told them about working at the factory, without food all day. Jesus then ate and drank and lay down to rest but said not ing of his destroying the vessels. The next morning the owner and his workmen discovered the loss and decided that Jesus must have done it because they had not paid

Him. Then they all went to Joseph and told him of the wrong Jesus had done. Joseph doubted it but said he would go back with them and see. When they came to the factory everything was in perfect condition much to the astonishment and chagrin of the men. Joseph was angry and of an unforgiving attitude as well as a hypocrite according to the record given here. Jesus was all powerful in magic and sorcery and dominated by a malevolent and revengeful spirit. How such a story could be intended to throw light upon the character of Jesus--Jesus as we know him from our gospel writings!

We have not yet considered the boy Jesus in the light of his school experiences. Our extra-canonical sources give very elaborate accounts of his literary and scholarly accomplishments. The gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, the Arabic Gospel of the Infancy, and the four forms of the gospel of Thomas are the sources which include these school records.

Pseudo-Matthew and the Gospels of Thomas tell of Jesus' first experience with the zealous teacher, Zaccheus, when Jesus was about five years old.[1] It would seem that Zaccheus did not approve of some of the actions and words of Jesus, but because he saw wonderful possibilities in the boy he went to Joseph and criticized him for the boy's lack of learning and manners. Joseph told him if he could restrain and teach Jesus anything he had permission to do it. But Jesus when he heard it made a lengthy answer and this ended the first attempt to place him under the discipline and teaching of Zaccheus.[2]

But Zaccheus went to Joseph and Mary a second time and commanded

[1] Donehoo. p. 153.
[2] Cowper. p. 69.

that they send Jesus to be taught as were other Jewish boys. This time they coaxed Jesus to go and went with him to the school where the old man Levi was to teach him his letters. We are led to believe by the story that Jesus was sulky; at least he refused to answer when Levi asked him to give him letters. Then Levi struck Jesus with a rod which provoked him to answer, "Why dost thou smite me? Know in truth, that he who is smitten rather teacheth him who smiteth him, than is taught by him. For I am able to teach thee what is said by thyself". Then as teacher, he began asking Levi the questions about the letters insuch terms as amazed the man. Then Levi cried out against Jesus for having so mocked and ridiculed him--but he admitted that he was conquered by the learning of this boy and puzzled as to what he was, "a magician, an angel, or a God". Then Jesus, to astound him more completely, performed divers miracles, in fact, the restoring of life, sight, hearing, and all infirmities. And he had so belittled all who had a part in this episode and exalted himself that they were quiet and said nothing more to him then. For who knew what malevolent miracle he might perform against them next!

Most of the sources agree that there were four attempts made to place Jesus in school. In the first two it was through the insistence of Zaccheus. The last two were more directly due to the influence of the people, who we gather, felt that if he were in school there would be less mischief going on. Joseph himself seemed to be worried about Jesus so sought out a more learned teacher than either Zaccheus or Levi. This man was to instruct him in both the Hebrew and the Greek. He began in

a very imperious and officious way. Jesus was silent at first and then turned on the teacher with a taunting question of his own. The man struck Jesus a hard blow and Jesus cursed him and he died. Then Jesus returned home, causing his parents added distress. They tried to keep him indoors to protect others from his angry curses and evil power.

Once more the people, among whom were both the princes and the priests, coaxed and threatened Joseph and Mary until they took Jesus to school again. This time it was to a friend of Joseph who thought that by means of flattery he could induce the boy to learn his letters. When this man began to teach, Jesus took the book from his hand and he himself began to read and to teach greater things than were in the book. He so taught the crowd that gathered that the master and they were spell-bound--he taught them great things of God and from the law. And because this teacher said he was a master, not a scholar, Jesus repented having killed his former teacher and brought him back to life. Then Joseph took the child home, satisfied that he was taught of God.[1]

If we believe these stories just related, and others like them, Jesus did not delight in, nor profit from the learning of those who were his teachers. These writers would have us believe that this remarkable child was God-taught: that in his perfection He was independent of human teaching. Thus they would explain the wisdom of Jesus. Here again it seems that we have the attempt to show that Jesus was not a normal boy--ordinary teachers and their learning were insignificant to Him, who was endued with all knowledge and all power.

[1]Donehoo. p. 160.

How meaningless such a portrayal makes this character if we are content with these records and explanations! How little He means to us as an example if we are trying to follow normal and ideal lives of growth! How inconsistent is this rude and overbearing character with that sensitive and developing character as we know it from the Four Gospels.

Most of these stories of Jesus' childhood are so opposite in character and so out of keeping with what we know of Jesus, the kind, thoughtful, and sympathetic man of the New Testament. But there is one incident late in the childhood which is quite similarly told by both the canonical and the extra-canonical sources. Here, for almost the first time the apocryphal literature is on common ground with the literature of the New Testament. I refer to the trip to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve years old. It may be noted too that this incident is given with a great similarity of detail by the several apocryphal writers who record this period in Jesus' life. This is not so true of many of the other incidents. The account in Luke is a very simple statement of what happened. "And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking

for him. And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearingthem, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw Him they were astonished; and his mother said unto Him, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing". And he said unto them, "How is it that ye sought me? Knew ye not that I must be in my father's house?" And they understood not the saying which He spoke unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them; and His mother kept all these sayings in her heart.And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."[1] A general statement at the close summarizes the normal development of Jesus. We wish it had been more but it is consistent with what we believe was his later life.

We must note the attempt of the later writers to add some original features to the canonical story as given by Luke. The Arabic Gospel gives these details of Jesus' great display of learning at the temple. Luke says that he listened and asked questions but the later gospels have Jesus ask such hard questions that he had to answer them himself. And He explained the scriptures, the laws, the mysteries and the teachings contained in them. In turn He astonished the astronomers, the philosophers and the natural scientists, explaining things that they did not know before. This story also has added to it the blessings and praises which the scribes and Pharisees and teachers heaped upon Mary when she

[1]Luke 2:41-52.

came and found her son among them. Then, as in Luke, the account is ended by the statement that "Jesus advanced in stature and in wisdom and in favor with God and man." Strange it is that practically all the preceding accounts and statements portray so unnatural a development and this one would summarize his childhood growth as a normal one. Donehoo says the entire course of apocryphal writings deny this statement.

The Apocryphal gospels briefly suggest what Jesus was interested in and what he was doing from the time he was twelve. Why the change came we do not know but it is said that Jesus began to hide his miracles and secrets and took up the study of law. This he did until he was thirty years old when God publicly declared him as his son. It seems so strange that with so complete a record of his early life that these writers make no effort to fill this period. Donehoo thinks perhaps they were restrained by the statement in John that the miracle at Cana was the first wrought by Jesus in public.[1] But we wonder why he needed to study the law when the gospel writer has just said that he knew and explained the law perfectly. Some writers say he was a carpenter during these years--others that the time was spent in prayer and contemplation, and still others had him go to Egypt where he was instructed by the priests. But the Apocryphal and New Testament records are silent about any incidents of this period, except that he "did every work of mankind, sin only excepted". Donehoo says this is a much more sensible guess as to the occupation of the mysterious eighteen years.[2]

According to many reckonings Christ was about eighteen years old

[1] Donehoo. p. 166.
[2] Donehoo. p. 167.

whenhis father died, others say he was twelve. Joseph is represented as having great physical and mental vigor and unimpaired health even up to the day of his death. Through the death of his father Jesus had the opportunity to discuss the question of death and to state his doctrine of eternal life. This seems to have been the purpose of the account.

We have followed the apocryphal stories of the development of Jesus' boyhood character. And what a contrast to the simple suggestions of normal character development found in our canonical gospels! How little they add to the character of Jesus as we have come to know and understand Him after he entered years of manhood. And this normal character development is certainly more consistent with what we know of his home, his parents and his ministry. And we know something of the home circle and the environment in which Jesus was reared. Joseph and Mary maintained a spiritually religious home in contrast to many other Jewish homes where religious formalism was dominant. Joseph was righteous (Matt. 1:19) and obedient to the will of God as it was made known to him. (Matt. 1:24; 2:14) He seems to have taught Jesus his own trade of carpenter. (Mk. 6:3; Matt. 13:55) Jesus never referred directly to his earthly father but certainly the fatherhood of J$_o$seph must have influenced his conception and experience of the Heavenly Father. His love for children and his understanding of them argue for a remembrance of his own happy childhood. The family was poor but not dependent and from all we know it wasa pure and noble home life in which were manifest great spiritual characteristics.

And Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature, and why not? Paul's

statement of his own growth and development is certainly applicable here. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." Such a remembered development and growth in learning and judgment does not detract from the beauty and worth of Jesus' character. Rather, it should have richer and deeper meaning for all, for we are taught by Him to grow. A real teacher does that which he teaches others to do. And Jesus was a real teacher.

Jesus' home was one in which a child could not help but grow. In a home like that of Mary and Joseph, the learning of the law was an important part of the training as soon as a child could speak--it was a part of the religious instruction required by the law. From Jesus' later teachings we gather that He knew the Old Testament well. His parents and his teachers and the teachings in the synagogue certainly were responsible for that.[1]

Jesus' development was certainly influenced by the world around him. His many nature parables and illustrations show that he was a close observer. This sense of observation must have been developed in those early years when he had time to watch and ponder.

And Jesus must have been in close, sympathetic touch with mankind during those early years of development when habits and attitudes were being formed. He did not live a narrow, self-centered life. As he became very much of a man he must have been very much of a boy, for great, good men do not grow over night.

[1]Gilbert, George Holley: Students Life of Jesus. p. 38.

EVALUATION OF THE APOCRYPHAL AND NEW TESTAMENT MATERIALS

We have taken a somewhat critical view of the material found in both the canonical and the extra-canonical sources. Such a study has brought out the few similarities and the many contrasts and even conflicts of incidents in the narrated stories of the childhood life of Jesus. As we study the few canonical narratives which are concerned with this period, we find them consistent with the narratives of Jesus' later life. But the apocryphal representation of Jesus' childhood is in direct contrast and conflict with what we know of Jesus' later life as recorded in our New Testament gospels. This brings us logically to the questions, "What then is the value of these apocryphal narratives? And how do we know they have value?" Let us answer the second question first. In the literary field the value of a piece of work is proved by its continued existence and the interest in it from year to year and from generation to generation. If it stands the test of time and makes a universal contribution it has lasting value. We may judge these narratives on that same basis. In the early history of the formation of the church extracts from these records were used by the church Fathers. This gave them prestige and from them many teachings and usages were developed by the later church. Thus many forms and dogmas, with a semblance of authority, have been handed down, and are accepted by many today. A fuller insight into the character of Jesus is a desire of every age. This desire impells students to examine for themselves all available records pertaining to His life. The present age finds these students, searchers after truth, studying and comparing, contemplating and criti-

cizing these many writings. The very fact that these records are still in existence, and are being studied now after the passing of hundreds of centuries is proof that they have made some contribution and have some value. Before we decide what is the contribution of this great body of material let us consider it from another angle. Have these many records any literary beauty?

This great mass of writings, grotesque and disgusting, is not at all comparable with the restrained delicacy of revealment found in our New Testament writings. So much stress and emphasis is placed on the physical side of Jesus' entrance into the world that from the first there is a repelling effect produced. This is characteristic in practically all of the representations of Christ's acts and development. Such a conception can produce little that is conducive to the elevating of the mind or uplifting of the soul. Donehoo has expressed it in his paragraph on 'The Intrinsic Value and Past Influence of this Literature'.[1] He says, "The total impression produced by an examination of the voluminous literature embraced in the text cannot but be one of disappointment. Not that it does not contain much that is novel and interesting, but so much more naturally might have been expected from it----this literature, as a whole, is characterized by no elevation of thought, no power of imagination, no depth of that poetical feeling which might have been expected in the treatment of a theme so exalted. It is crude, commonplace, as destitute of graces of form, as it is of originality in thought; and it descends at every turn to the level of the puerile, or

[1]Donehoo. Introduction pp. XIX-XXIII.

extends into the domain of the irrational. It must even remain a wonder of literary inefficiency, and a testimony to the unique and inimitable character of the canonical gospels.--as for the Apocryphal Gospels ordinarily so called, I can think of but few passages in them, principally in the Protevangelium, which rise to the dignity of Literature. Over against these must be set hundreds of expressions and passages that are not alone weak, vapid, puerile; but also coarse, vulgar and painful."

If the foregoing is true, "Why are we interested further in these writings?" When we consider what they are intended to do, our answer is almost self-evident. They pretend to add to our knowledge and understanding of Jesus and to supply those facts not given in the canonical gospels. Bishop Ellicott says, "Our vital interest in Him, of whom they pretend to tell us more than the canonical scriptures have recorded, is the real reason why these poor figments are read with interest even while they are despised--yet still the secret conviction buoys us up, that perchance they may contain a few traces of time-honored traditions--some faint, feeble glimpses of that blessed childhood, that pensive and secluded youth, over which in passive moments, we muse with such irrepressible desire to know more."[1]

Our question then is, "Do these uncanonical gospels impart any additional knowledge of the words, works, and character of Jesus?" We have partially answered this question when we have pointed out that there is a conflict between the canonical and apocryphal representation of Jesus as a child. The simple, restrained, and delicate touches given by Mat-

[1]Cowper: Introduction p. XIVII

thew and Luke induce a truly exalted and spiritual conception of Jesus. The material added by the apocryphal writers is so vulgar and grotesque as to make Jesus a very unrefined and unreasonable character. Mary and Joseph are indirectly characterized as sharing and abetting the repulsive and unethical attitudes of Jesus insuch a way that all three are a questionable character. The picture of Jesus willfully destroying property and taking life is not consistent with our conception of Jesus' high ethical standards.

It is a monstrosity of character that these gospels portray and yet they are said to represent what in the imagination of some thinkers must have occurred, if the Christ on whom they believed, was really the Son of God. The Jesus of these tales is not human nor does he savor of the Divine.

Some authorities think that many of these stories were invented to force a credence of many of the theological and philosophical considerations which were being brought forward.[1] They certainly were not written from a historical or biographical interest. Many myths and legends were brought forth to explain the incarnation and to properly supply the interpretation and method of fulfilment of Old Testament Prophecy. We sometimes think Matthew overdoes the matter when he so often makes Jesus the fulfilment of so many prophecies but his trespass is slight compared with that of the apocryphal writers.

Shall we say then, that the Apocryphal gospels do not add to our knowledge or understanding of Jesus? They add much material yes, but we

[1] Burkitt: The Gospel and its Transmission. p. 337.

could discard that and still have the beautiful character of the New Testament. Even with the load of additional material the eighteen silent years are still silent. It is hard to explain this silence in the apocryphal gospels. Burkitt says this is the reason he thinks these writings were for purposes of theological and philosophical indoctrination. Others seem to agree with him when they say that the proof of the Divinity and Incarnation were the main motives for writing these accounts and that the period of the silent years did not affect these dogmas. This period had no dogmatic theological belief to state or preserve, therefore there was no reason for trying to fill this gap.[1] Others say that the silence is due to the restraining influence of the fourth gospel, that its lack of words made no framework for the enlarging or distorting of facts. But this very silence may have saved us the pain of witnessing a further distortion and abuse of the character of one who means so much to us.

It is very generally agreed that these writings add very little to an appreciation or understanding of Jesus. It is quite generally agreed too, that they have nevertheless had some value, and have been put to uses perhaps not intended by their writers. Many literary productions owe their inspiration to the apocryphal materials. Even the popular literature of our own country and times furnishes examples of this. Many moralities, miracle plays, mysteries and carols were drawn from these sources and have been popular. A poem, illustrating this, has been found in a chap-book printed about 1843, at Birmingham.[2] A Saxon nun had used many many of these stories in her poetry, written before 968.

[1] Burkitt. p. 337ff.
[2] Cowper. Introduction. Pp. XXV-XL

Gregory of Tours used many quotations from the apocrypha. A more modern use made of these sources is found in the story of the Golden Legend written in Latin by a Dominican monk and translated by Longfellow.

Many great works of art have been inspired by these traditions and legends, such as (1) Mary's Parents and the events of her conception and birth, (2) Mary's service in the Temple, (3) Her betrothal to Joseph, (4) The Annunciation, (5) The Nativity of the Cave and (6) The flight into Egypt.

Again Tischendorf shows that these legends were used to support various doctrines and opinions concerning Christ, Mary, Joseph, the parents of Mary, The Descent of Christ into the Underworld and others. Then he shows how these came to be of general influence in the Catholic church.[1] Donehoo says too that these sources furnish the interpretations of many mysterious text of scripture.[2]

We have said that these stories were not written from a historical point of view. Nevertheless these Apocryphal Gospels may be of historical interest in that they throw light on the manners and customs of the Jews in early Christian times. Sometimes statements are found that contradict history, but usually there is a dogmatic bias which led to the perversion of facts.[3] This literature is also important for its connection with some of the problems concerning the date and authorship of the four gospels. Some authorities consider these records of great value for this reason if for no other.

Such slight acquaintance with these writings, establishes, by contrast,

[1] Cowper. p. XLIV.
[2] Donehoo. p. XXII.
[3] Tasker, J. G. Hasting's Dictionary, Extra Vol. p. 421.

the unique value of the cononical gospels and furnishes the best refutation to those theories which would seek to lift these extravagant stories to the same level as the four gospels.[1] The direct contrast of these two gospel sources makes us appreciate the real character portrayal of Jesus as we find it in our own New Testament gospels. The restraint and simplicity, the spiritual atmosphere and beauty of the four gospels are the virtues which give them a place in the canon. It is the lack of these same virtues which keep the others out.

[1] Tasker, T. G. Hasting's Dictionary, Extra Vol. p. 421.

CANONICAL AND EXTRA-CANONICAL RECORDS OF JESUS' CHILDHOOD

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

In judging the character of the apocryphal writings I have tried to be fair. In a critical study of so great a mass of material it is so easy to go either to one extreme or the other--to err on the side of too much adverse criticism or on the side of an over-appreciation. In this study it has been our purpose to find the real value of these writings. The value was to be decided upon the basis of whether or not these gospels add to our appreciation and understanding of Jesus. We find that they do not for what they tell us is not consistent with what we find in our four gospels. His later life and teachings, as found in our New Testament sources deny the many things told of his early life in these sources. Perhaps their greatest value isthat they add to, rather than lessen our appreciation of our canonical gospels. And Jesus is all the more our Example, our Counselor, and our Friend.

CANONICAL AND EXTRA-CANONICAL RECORDS OF JESUS' CHILDHOOD

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Donehoo, James De Quincy--The Apocryphal and Legendary Life of Christ. New York -Macmillan Company-1903.

Orr, James--New Testament Apocryphal Writings (The Temple Bible) Philadelphia-J.B. Lippincott and Co. 1903.

Andrews, H. T.--Apocryphal Books of the Old and New Testament.(Century Bible Handbook) New York-Hodden and Stoughton--1909.

Dictionary of the Bible--James Hastings (editor) New York. Charles Scribner's Sons- 1911. Vol. I pp. 110-123. By Frank C. Porter.

Dictionary of the Bible--James Hastings (editor) New York. Charles Scribner's Sons--1911. Extra Volume. pp. 420k438. by J. A. Tosher.

Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels--James Hastings (editor) New York. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1906. Vol. I pp. 671-685. by A. F. Findlay.

Walker, Alexander--(editor) Apocryphal Gospels, Acts and Revelations. Vol. II T. T. Clark 1873. Anti-Nicene Library-Edinburgh.

Cowper, B. Harris--Apocryphal Gospels and Other Documents, relating to the History of Christ. London-Williams and Noogote- 1867.

Salmon, George--Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament (third edition). London- John Murray. 1888. pp. 192-209.

Encyclopedia Brittanica (eleventh edition) New York. 1910. Encyclopedia Brittanica Pub. Co. Vol I. Article "Apocrypha"-by Robert A. Charles.

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia--James Orr (editor) 1915.
Chicago- Howard Severance Company. Vol I. Article
" Apocryphal Gospels"- by J. Hutchinson.

Apocryphal New Testament--being all the gospels, epistles and other pieces now extant, attributed in the first four centuries to Jesus Christ and his apostles and companions and not included in the New Testament. Boston-N. H. Whitaker-1832.

Stowe, Calvin Ellis--Origin and History of the Books of the Bible.
Hartford Publishing Company, Hartford, Connecticut-1867.

Gilbert, George Holley--The Student's Life of Jesus--1924.
Macmillan Company, New York.

Burkitt--The Gospel and its Transmission- 1906. T.T. Clark, Edinburgh.
Charles Scribner's Sons.

Oxenham, John--Hidden Years--1926--New York.
Longmans, Green and Company.

James, Montague Rhodes--The Apocryphal New Testament. 1924.
Oxford--Clarendon Press, New York.

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
1 1719 02487 0901

NOT TO BE TAKEN
FROM THE LIBRARY